

CHAPTER 3 SECTION 8.6

CRYOTHERAPY (CRYOSURGERY) FOR LIVER METASTASES

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I. PROCEDURE CODE

47399

II. DESCRIPTION

Cryotherapy is defined as the in situ destruction of tissues using subzero temperatures. The procedure is performed by inserting into the tumor a thin probe that fills with liquid nitrogen, freezing the surrounding tissue. The freezing destroys the tumor tissue, which is then slowly absorbed by the body over time. The probe insertion and freezing process are monitored precisely by ultrasound. Cryotherapy usually involves a cycle of treatments in which the tumor is frozen, allowed to thaw, and then refrozen. The liver is a common site of metastatic disease.

TRICARE may cost-share medically necessary services and supplies related to cryosurgery for liver metastases subject to the "Policy Considerations" section below:

III. POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

A. TRICARE may cost-share cryotherapy for liver metastases when the following criteria is met:

1. Absence of active malignancies outside the liver.
2. The patient is an acceptable risk for major surgery.
3. Conventional hepatic resection is not possible due to volume of disease, location of disease, multiplicity of lesions or need for preservation of normal liver.

B. The device being used must meet the criteria outlined in [Chapter 7, Section 10.1](#).

IV. EFFECTIVE DATE December 1, 1991.

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